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THE PROSODY OF QUESTIONS IN THE AMUR EVENKS' SPEECH: PITCH

Abstract

Intonational contours of interrogative sentences in the Evenki language have rarely been in the focus of researchers' attention either theoretically or practically. In this article, this problem is studied from the standpoint of experimental phonetics. Pitch patterns of the general, and special questions are described. The experimental samples were simple sentences with one emphasis center. The material for the study was collected from 11 speakers of the Eastern dialect group of the Evenki language. The obtained results are the following. A typical intonation contour of the general question in the Evenki language is Rise. In the course of the experiment, it was found that in order to identify interrogation in the Evenki general questions, the rising intonation of the last syllable was essential. Special questions were characterized by the Falling pitch pattern with the nucleus on the verb. Our data differ from the ones previously obtained by N. Ya. Bulatova and L. Grenoble (1999) who found rising pitch on the sentence-initial question word.

Keywords: the Evenki language, general question, special question, intonation, Rise, Fall.

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